



**Testimony
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the
Environment Committee
March 11, 2015**

- **SB- 366 AN ACT EXTENDING THE BAN ON THE USE OF LAWN CARE PESTICIDES TO SCHOOLS THAT HOUSE GRADES NINE TO TWELVE, INCLUSIVE, AND TO STATE FACILITIES**
- **SB- 1063 AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES ON SCHOOL GROUNDS AND CERTAIN PUBLIC SPACES, AUTHORIZING THE USE OF CERTAIN MICROBIALS AND REESTABLISHING THE PESTICIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) opposes **SB-366** and **SB-1063**, which extend the ban on the use of Integrated Pest Management Plans to high schools and other public grounds.

Since the ban on the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plans on K-8 school grounds became effective on July 1, 2010, COST has heard from many towns throughout the state regarding the problems they face maintaining athletic fields and school grounds.

For example, in North Stonington, four years after the state banned the use of IPM on school grounds, the ball fields at the middle school became unusable due to grub infestations which attracted animals that dug into the field. To address the problem, the town spent \$30,000 to reseed the field but they are concerned that this will only help for a little while until the grubs reappear.

COST has heard from numerous towns throughout Connecticut whose athletic fields, fence lines and school grounds simply cannot be maintained adequately and safely due to the restrictions on the use of Integrated Pest Management Plans. Many believe it is just a matter of time before their athletic fields are rendered unusable due to infestations or invasive species.

SB-366 and SB-1053, by extending the ban to include high school fields, parks, playgrounds, and municipal greens, will result in more fields and grounds falling into disrepair, creating potentially hazardous situations for residents and visitors.

Moreover, the ban on Integrated Pest Management is simply not justified. Integrated Pest Management only authorizes the *judicious application of pesticides under very limited circumstances* to help ensure that towns can properly manage athletic fields to protect the safety of student athletes. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's recent update on Integrated Pest Management, IPM is a cost-effective way of reducing exposure to



pests and pesticides while *reducing* overall pesticide use. Given these findings, it is surprising that Connecticut does not consider repealing the ban on IPM.

Understandably, communities want to continue to do their part to ensure that state laws and policies involving the use of pesticides are successful in protecting the health and safety of our children. Towns have been actively searching for ways in which to proceed, but continue to be faced with differing viewpoints and somewhat conflicting studies relative to pesticides.

To address this, last year, the MORE Commission Mandate Subcommittee recommended the creation of a Pesticide Advisory Council to develop policies around the use of pesticides. Rather than extend the IPM to other municipal fields and grounds, COST urges lawmakers to support the MORE Commission Mandate Subcommittee recommendations to:

1. Utilize the legislatively created Pesticide Advisory Council to review all new pesticides on a continuing basis for safety and effectiveness and report their findings to the Commissioner of DEEP for consideration; and
2. Require DEEP, in consultation with the Pesticide Advisory Council, to develop and disseminate best practices to assist in guiding towns regarding these issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.